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ABSTRACT

Described is Project IMPACT in Berrien County, Michigan, designed to develop and implement a flexible instructional model for training classroom teachers in techniques and procedures to meet the needs of mainstreamed children having learning and adjustment problems. (IM)

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Mainstreaming USA: 1977 Update
Project IMPACT

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IMPACT, an Instructional Model Program for All Children and Teachers, has successfully provided for the mainstreaming of handicapped children in Berrien County, Michigan, for the past six years. The project was conceived during the 1970-71 school year by a small team of school psychologists and special education teacher consultants. They were concerned with three pressing issues:

1. A large back log of referrals for psychological testing.

2. Waiting lists for placement in special education programs to serve LD and EI students.

3. The isolation of students once placed in special education programs.

General education teachers were asking for help in coping with these students in their classrooms while awaiting testing and special education placement. A practical teacher training in-service program designed to provide teachers with the skills to educate handicapped children was needed.

Project IMPACT was funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (E.S.E.A.) Title III: Innovative and Exemplary Programs. The goal of the project was to develop and implement a flexible instructional model by training teachers in the use of diagnostic/prescriptive teaching techniques along with classroom management and organizational procedures which will allow them to meet the needs of children in their classrooms who have learning and adjustment problems. IMPACT training provides teachers with a system for enriching the educational environment, thus enabling children with special needs to be educated successfully in a general purpose classroom.

Teachers are systematically guided through a developmental series of in-service training workshops designed to provide them with knowledge and skills to meet the needs of children with learning, adjustment, or physical problems. The content of the workshop program provides teachers with additional skills in the:

1. Implementation of a success-oriented curriculum;

2. Assessment of academics, behavior, and learning processes;

3. Development of behavioral objectives;

4. Development of prescriptions utilizing appropriate materials and techniques.

The IMPACT Workshop Kit consists of a series of six filmstrips, with accompanying cassettes, the IMPACT Box, the IMPACT Manual, and the IMPACT Instructor's Manual. All materials of the IMPACT Teacher Training Workshop Kit were developed, written, and prepared by the IMPACT staff. Workshop manuals are written in a modular format consisting of a behavioral objective, materials needed, content, delivery system, and evaluation.

The workshop training series consists of five days and corresponds to the organization of the IMPACT Box:

Session I	Classroom Organization and Twelve Principles of a Success-Oriented Curriculum.
Session II	Assessment of Academic Skill Deficits and Behavior Problems.
Session III	Prescriptions for Remediation of Academic Deficits and Behavior Problems.
Session IV	Assessment of Learning Process Deficits Related to Developmental Lag or Learning Disabilities.
Session V	Prescriptions for Remediation and/or Accommodation of Learning Process Deficits.

"IMPACT - Did Today Matter?", the project's introductory filmstrip, provides a brief overview of how the IMPACT diagnostic/prescriptive teaching system helps teachers design a specific program to meet the needs of the handicapped or special needs child without ignoring the majority of the class by utilizing actual case studies of children from the classrooms of three IMPACT demonstration teachers:

Kay had a student named Carole, a hydrocephalic child with a medical record of suspected brain damage. Kay found Carole to be an average student academically but noted symptoms of frustration such as stuttering and a very uneven learning pattern.

Mary had a fourth grader who was mildly retarded. Because he was no discipline problem to his teachers, he had been allowed to just sit or to do classroom jobs; no one had taken the time to individualize his instruction and teach him at his achievement level.

Pat, an excellent first grade teacher, was faced with coping with an emotionally disturbed child who cried, hit her classmates and called them names, and threw chairs in anger but for no apparent reason. Classroom teachers cannot become therapists, but they can provide structure and expectations to help children cope with school.

The IMPACT program delineated twelve operating principles of teaching which result in a success-oriented curriculum for students:

1. Provide tasks for children which are within their capability.

2. Design individualized programs for children with special learning problems so that they can be at least 75% successful.

3. Provide materials and techniques which give immediate feedback and reinforcement.

4. Provide self-selection of materials and activities within structured choices.

5. Select and store materials where they can easily be reached by the child and the teacher.

6. Program with a wide variety of manipulative, multi-sensory materials.

7. Provide a set of experiences which require problem-solving and incorporate the inquiry approach.

8. Provide opportunity for freedom of movement within socially acceptable guidelines.

9. Provide opportunity for children to interact together on learning tasks.

10. Provide guidelines and opportunity for care and use of materials and equipment.

11. Encourage and provide guidelines and opportunities to work independently at assigned or chosen tasks.

12. Provide behavioral guidelines and encourage socially appropriate behavior.

One means of practicing these twelve principles is through the use of learning centers. Teachers are taught how to establish centers utilizing a dominant (full class, full day) or a transitional (part of the class; part of the day) approach. Floor plans are viewed, scheduling problems are solved, and resources of ideas for learning center activities are made available to the workshop participants.

Following this introduction to the IMPACT program, workshop participants spend the remainder of the day visiting demonstration classrooms. Fifteen demonstration classrooms are currently operating in Berrien County. They demonstrate in a variety of teaching styles and at a variety of grade levels the classroom organization of learning centers, classroom management, and diagnostic/prescriptive techniques advocated by IMPACT. The Twelve Principles are in evidence in these selected classrooms.

Workshop Session II is devoted to the diagnosis of problems. The IMPACT diagnostic/prescriptive system asks the teachers to administer some or all of the informal assessments to their problem children. It is important not to burden teachers with complete academic assessments, but instead to help them determine the priority problem areas. They begin by completing a checklist of symptoms to ascertain which informal assessments will be most helpful in diagnosing the students' academic deficits.

To train teachers to use these criterion referenced tests, they are divided into small groups with an IMPACT consultant available to each group. Implementing the learning center approach facilitates the small group instruction; teachers rotate from center to center as each informal academic test is explained by a consultant. Teachers may become more involved by role playing--one teacher administers an actual test to a colleague.

After the teachers administer the inventories that they feel are appropriate to a child in their classroom, they should be able to discover a major problem area of the child as well as at least one strength. These are recorded on the IMPACT Skill and Behavior Assessment Profile. If possible a program will be developed for the child using the areas of strengths and

success to help remediate and/or accommodate skill deficits and behavior problems.

Teachers attend the third workshop session after administering the assessments and completing the profiles for two students. At this session teachers are given instruction in developing a plan of remediation in a behavioral objective format. The component parts of a behavioral objective (terminal behavior, conditions, criteria) are taught by means of a self correcting matching card game, and each participant writes a long-term objective and the first short-term objective for both of the students.

Teachers leave workshop session III ready to begin a program of remediation for the students they have assessed. The implementation of the remedial techniques and materials may be accomplished through learning center activities or may involve the use of paraprofessional personnel, adult volunteers, or cross-grade tutoring. Consultants will meet with the teachers a minimum of once a month to record program progress, make revisions, and develop additional short term objectives.

Between workshop sessions III and IV approximately three months elapse. This allows the teachers time to program for the problem students in academic areas or behavior. But perhaps there are some problem children who do not make the progress the teachers had hoped for. It is at this point that IMPACT examines the possibility of a deficit in one or more of the process areas.

IMPACT has developed a set of informal assessments that deal with learning processes in the haptic, auditory, and visual channels and the motor and vocal expressive modalities. These are designed much like the academic and behavior assessments discussed earlier and are also criterion referenced rather than normed tests.

To begin workshop IV, teachers are shown the filmstrip entitled "LD: Teaching the Unteachable" which presents an overview of the learning disability field. IMPACT identifies and discusses fifteen learning processes and three expressive process areas. Teachers develop skills at task analysis, so that they can determine what processes are operating when a student is successful at a given task.

A role playing game has been developed to help teachers become more familiar with symptoms that a child with a process disorder might exhibit. Cards are distributed to participants; there is a teacher role card for each activity and a student role card. For example, the teacher asks the student to write his name on the board. The participant acting as student goes to the board and writes the name from right to left and forms the letters backwards. This situation is used to analyze what mini-tasks were required of the student to complete the task and what symptoms of learning process deficits were displayed by the student.

The last workshop session deals with programming in the learning process area. Teachers attend workshop session V after they have administered parts of the learning process inventories and have recorded the data on the Learn-

ing Assessment Profile. Each consultant meets with a small group of teachers to develop a behavioral objective which relates to the remediation of a learning process or expressive process deficit. The workshop then turns to remediation programming and to accommodating techniques. Development of an individualized remedial program is based on the student's strengths rather than on the student's weakness and is aimed at accomplishment of academic tasks rather than improvement in perceptual tasks per se. The accommodation techniques are ways of making life easier for the child with learning process deficits. Since remediation is slow, difficult, and sometimes impossible, the accommodation techniques enable the student to get an education despite his learning problems.

IMPACT's consultants continue to meet with the participants in their schools for the remainder of the school year, providing programming and behavior management suggestions, assisting in the recording of student progress, and generally assisting the teachers in implementing the principles and skills taught in the workshops.

IMPACT's evaluation results show that both teachers and students have made significant changes as a result of the teachers' IMPACT training.

Teachers were tested before and after the workshops by a written multiple-choice test to measure cognitive knowledge gain. The results were significant at the .001 level.

An evaluation team from the R.E.D.E. (Research Experimentation Development Evaluation) Center of Western Michigan University observed participants' classrooms before and after training. They found changes related to instructional strategies in three main areas to be significant at the .05 level:

1. Physical room arrangement to accommodate individual learning styles.

2. Behavior management (teachers had adopted a consistent management system).

3. A learning center approach for small group and individual programming.

Student change was measured by pre and posttesting results of the IMPACT informal assessments and by the Peabody Individual Achievement Test. Results were significant again at the .001 level of probability. In addition, the IMPACT Program Form was used to measure student growth. The results of the program form data showed that 97% of the 841 short term objectives stated by teacher participants were met. Eighty percent of the 199 long term objectives were met.

On the basis of the results of the 1973-74 project year, the evaluation team made the following conclusions:

1. The IMPACT workshop consultation program results in change in teachers' behavior and cognition. These changes enable IMPACT teachers to:

a. assess and program for children with special learning behavior problems.

b. implement learning principles consistent with a success-oriented curriculum and, in particular, to use learning centers to facilitate programming for exceptional children.

2. Children with learning or behavior problems can have critical difficulties remediated or accommodated in the general purpose classroom setting when taught by IMPACT teachers. A related, though more tentative, conclusion is that all children in the class of the IMPACT teacher profit from their teacher's changes in behavior and growth and cognitive knowledge.

3. Teachers are able to identify children with learning and behavior problems on the basis of their instructional activities with the children and through observation. This identification is not necessarily categorical, but does include those children who are in need of special programming.

Project IMPACT has been recognized for its excellence in various ways. It is the recipient of two outstanding educational awards, the Educational Pacesetter Award given by the President's National Advisory Council on Supplementary Centers and Services and the Excellence in Education Award given by the National Association of State Advisory Council Chairmen. The IMPACT program has successfully passed both state and federal validation procedures; the federal validation score was 75 out of a possible 75 points.

After reviewing the IMPACT materials, Michigan State University has granted college credit to teacher participants for the IMPACT training and related activities as a Workshop in Education: The Special Needs Child in the Regular Classroom.

Academic Therapy Publications of San Rafael, California, commercially distributes the IMPACT Box, a collection of over 500 file cards of information and teaching ideas which correlates with the five workshop sessions.

IMPACT is currently a Title IV-C Experimental and Demonstration Project funded by the Michigan Department of Education, Lansing, Michigan. As such the project has been implemented in 27 school districts and over 400 classrooms throughout Michigan. For more information contact Linda Olson, Director, IMPACT, Berrien County Intermediate School District, 711 St. Joseph Avenue, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103.